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# Pulpit Preaching

VOL. XII, No. 11 NOVEMBER, 1959

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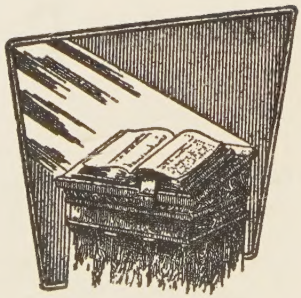

## EDITORIAL COMMENTS

The sermons in this issue emphasize themes which are central to the Advent and Christmas message. Next month's topics will be "Our Lord's Parables" and "Month of Beginnings," sermons for the New Year.

## BOOKS FOR PULPIT PREACHING

**Candle, Star and Christmas Tree** is a seasonal volume which tells in a devotional manner about the origins of our traditional Christmas customs and of their deeper meanings. This little book is similar in format to **Christmas in Our Hearts**, which was also written by Charles L. Allen and Charles L. Wallis. (Fleming H. Revell Co., 64 pp., $1)

The 1960 edition of **The Ministers Manual**, edited by M. K. W. Heicher, not only maintains a consistently high level of quality-resources for sermonic and worship use, but continues each year to offer new values and up-to-date materials. The thirty-fifth annual edition is more appealing than any of its forerunners. (Harper & Brothers, 362 pp., $3)

The Concordance Reference edition of the Revised Standard Version will be a day-by-day companion in study and worship for pastors and laymen who discover its many valuable advantages. These include more than 75,000 center column references, twelve maps and a 192-page concordance. (Thomas Nelson & Sons, $9)

**Putting Your Faith to Work** by John A. Redhead contains fifteen

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## WORTH QUOTING

**E. Paul Hovey**
**The Federated Churches**
**Lewiston, Idaho**

Unless your Church is the point of intersection where a living person is confronted by the Living Lord of all life, it is not a Church. Unless your Church is the point of intersection where a living community of persons is constantly met and remade by the judgment and love of God, it is not a Church. — Donald S. Lamka

* * *

Parents who would not think of turning their children over to charity organizations or to relatives or to anyone else for the purpose of having them meet the physical needs of their children are constantly surrendering the minds and spirits of these same children to the movies, the "funnies," the radio, the dance hall, to questionable songs, and to evil forces in general. — John Q. Schisler

* * *

There was a riot of hardened criminals in the State Prison of Massachusetts. The authorities couldn't figure out what caused it. "Not the food," they said, "not the discipline no, something stranger and more moving." Ted Green, one of the prisoners, tried to explain it to the newspapermen. "I've done a lot of bad things in my life, boys, a lot of evil things. My only wish now is that sometime I might do a good thing, like giving my eyes so a blind child might see. The trouble with life imprisonment is; you get to wonder

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Pulpit Preaching

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# THE DEEPER MEANINGS OF CHRISTMAS

## T. ANDREW AND THE SEASON OF ADVENT

**Homer J. R. Elford**
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On the Christian Calendar November 30th is designated as "St. Andrew's Day." The origin of special days and seasons in the Christian calendar dates back to the early beginnings of the Christian movement when it was deemed wise to use every opportunity to remind the faithful of their heritage. Every important fact, event and person came to be included in the archives of the communal memory through these special observances. As days were set aside for celebrating the birthday or martyrdom of some great contributor in the Christian drama, the people were led to dedicate themselves to the ideals which had inspired this noble personage. Exactly why November 30th was chosen to celebrate the life of Andrew, I do not know. We probably would never mention it were it not for the fact that we are told that the Season of Advent begins on the Sunday nearest St. Andrew's Day, November 30th. But herein lies its real significance, for the more we look to the personality of Andrew the clearer it becomes that he is a worthy symbol to mark the beginning of the Christian year.

Andrew does not occupy a prominent place in the Gospel record, but when we see him he is always doing something which is vitally important in terms of helping Christ fulfill His ministry to men. It was Andrew who brought his brother, Simon Peter, to Jesus and in so doing presented to our Lord one of the most talented men whom the world has ever known. It was to Andrew that the little boy brought his basket of five barley loaves and a few small fish. Andrew gave them to Jesus who not only used them to satisfy the hunger of the multitude, but also to draw an example of the power of faith and the value of every person's contribution to the Kingdom. When the Greeks came wanting to see Jesus they approached Philip, but he felt that Andrew could best handle the situation. He knew how effectively to deal with people and enable them to appreciate the privilege which would be theirs in coming into the presence of Jesus. These references combine to illustrate the fact that oft-times an obscure, apparently untalented person can be of tremendous importance to Christ by serving as a messenger, a guide, "a contact person." Sometimes we may feel—as Andrew must often have felt—that there isn't very much that we can do for Christ. We look over our store of talents and it looks rather sparse. We could never imagine ourselves in the role of Peter, showing ourselves of such rock-like character that Jesus would choose us to found His church. It may be, however, that Jesus is waiting for us to make some contact for Him and to bring some Simon to Him who, in turn, will be able to do great things.

The fact that St. Andrew's Day marks the end of one Christian calendar year and the eve of a new one may have much more historical and theological significance than we are

implying just now, but at least it serves to launch us into an appreciation of the Advent season which always begins on the Sunday following St. Andrew's Day. The Advent season embraces the four Sundays prior to Christmas eve and is a time for preparing the way for the observance of Christ's entry into the world. If we are to be instrumental in saving Christmas from becoming a type of pagan feast in which people vie with one another for the more expensive presents to be given or received, it is vitally important that we keep before ourselves its deeper meanings and possibilities. In this year when we are increasingly mindful of the dangers which lurk in the dark shadows of the minds of the individuals and nations which do not know Christ, how wonderful it would be if every one of us tried, in his own way, to be an Andrew and to bring someone into the presence of the Christ.

There are many ways in which we may try to do this. For one thing, we may resolve that everything we do during this Advent season will be of such nature that we can dedicate it to the glory of Christ and that we can readily imagine Jesus approving of what we do, what we say and what we give. One of the great doctrines of our faith is expressed in the Scriptural phrase, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." It refers to the coming of God's Son into the world in the form of a human being that He might live among us and show us God's true character. In His ministry Jesus made it clear that if we are to be His disciples we must let Him dwell in us and we must let Him be seen in us. The living Word of God must be made flesh in your life and mine each day. Therefore, what we do at this particular season of the year by way of revealing to our friends and acquaintances just how much Christ means to us may well be the determining factor in bringing them into Christ's great fellowship, the church.

We all hate to be called "hypocrites." This word refers to one who professes to be one thing, but is another; who says he believes something, but doesn't act as though he does. The Advent season is an excellent time to prove to the world that we believe that Christ stands for the pure and the wholesome and that Christ wants His followers to show compassion upon the destitute. We can show just how seriously we take Jesus as we conduct ourselves as we believe He would have us and as we share our bounties with those who are in need.

It may be that as we follow these quiet paths which lead to the true celebration of Christ's birthday we shall prove ourselves to be good Andrews—good emissaries of Christ, who bring people into an awareness of the power and wonder of Jesus. If we can do that during this Advent season we shall have helped ourselves into a fresh awareness of the glory of the newborn king. He will find room at the inn of our hearts.

## CHRISTMAS PREPARATIONS

Binney Simpson Black, Chalmers Presbyterian Church, Uxbridge, Ontario

Let every heart prepare Him room. Isaac Watts

The season of Advent, which includes the four Sundays before Christmas means "arrival" and points to the day on which we celebrate His coming into the world. Surely so outstanding an event deserves much thought, and Christian people would do well to prepare for Easter. We know how the Lenten season is observed by multitudes of people for

ne deepening of their spiritual life. o it should be in reference to Christ-aas.

The Advent season has been ecognized and kept for some few undred years, but a wider use of may well be encouraged. If people verywhere take seriously the ap-roach of Christmas, and try to grasp ore fully the significance of the irth of Christ and what that event as meant to the human race through-ut almost twenty centuries, Christ-aas would be filled with more adiant meanings and Christians ould anticipate it with renewed awe nd wonder. Many of the unfortunate ccompaniments of Christmas would e eliminated if its spiritual import ere kept in mind. It would no long-r be largely a time—as it is with any—for merry making wherein easting and revelling are the chief ttractions. If the real meaning might hine brightly, the weeks leading up Christmas would not be so fever-h and exhausting and so marked y secular aspects.

Glance through the daily papers. ead the studied and attractive ad-ertisements. "Shop Early" is the ogan. There is no harm in shopping arly. To plan gifts for loved ones nd friends requires no little thought, gifts are to be wisely selected—nd if we are to keep in mind—eople less fortunate than ourselves. he spirit of true generosity needs ultivation; it is not something we ake over suddenly. The writing of eautiful cards and letters cannot be one in the last few days. Hence we joice to think that untold numbers f men and women, boys and girls ill be made happier in the Advent eason through the thoughtfulness of ose who are caught up by the pirit of Christmas and go "all out" planning and doing deeds of kind-ess. The more the hearts of all sorts nd conditions of men are touched ith sacrificial love, the better will e all mankind. What a needy world ours! And what opportunities there are on every hand to make others' burdens a little lighter and to send men on their way rejoicing.

But most of all we need another preparation. Many people prepare gifts for everyone except Him whose birthday it is! The deeper meaning of Christmas must grip our souls. Can it be that any of us are going to miss that? Why Christmas day? What brought it all about? What is the greatest fact underlying it? God's gift to a sinful and needy world. Christmas is the birthday of the world's greatest Friend and Benefactor, the world's only Saviour, who came from God to save men from their sins and failures and bring them into harmony with God. No wonder Paul exclaimed, "Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!" That Gift was to mean so much to the world that the angels sang about it on the first Christmas night.

This is why Christmas each year casts its spell over the minds of men. Christ is the center and soul of it, and through the Christian ages He has been the "Joy of loving hearts, the Fount of life, the Light of men." Every returning Lord's Day He vitalizes the Church's worship, as her Lord who is "alive for evermore" and "the same yesterday and today and for ever." Well did Bernard of Clairvaux sing:

O Jesus, Light of all below,
Thou Fount of life and fire,
Surpassing all the joys we know,
And all we can desire.

We cannot think aright of Jesus and bow our souls before Him as we ought unless we use the Advent weeks for preparation.

We can do this by reading, meditation, and prayer. It is a good time to bring out the family Bible, dust it off and keep it dusted. Let parents and children read together the lovely Christmas stories more and more as Christmas draws near. Sing the Christmas hymns around the family piano. Advent is a good time to go to church with greater regularity. Do

not neglect this specific preparation. In God's House we learn that it is at the peril of our deepest life that we put "creature comforts" first. When we permit the things of the body to monopolize our energy and time, the things of the spirit are neglected and forgotten. The whole Advent season should be planned and prayed about. Otherwise the supreme purpose of Christ's coming into the world will be missed. When this escapes us, our praises at Christmas will be only of the lips whilst our hearts remain cold. Our Christmas thoughts will culminate in mere emotion. What a sad commentary upon us if Christ is not the center and soul of all our celebrations!

Our preparation during Advent should be such as to leave an indelible mark upon our hearts and lives not only at Christmas but forever, issuing in a permanent dedication to the Saviour in body, mind and spirit. To dwell upon God's love in Christ is always a means of grace, and will tend to make the whole life different. "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all!"

We cannot afford to be a stranger to this greatest being who ever lived on earth and is "alive for evermore." He is, as He said, "the Light of the world." Emerson said truly that "the name of Jesus is not so much written as ploughed into the history of the world." The world's best literature, written by poets, philosophers, historians and saints offers its tribute at Christ's feet and confesses that His name and fame will never be surpassed. This radiant Figure more and more fills the horizon of men's thought as they contemplate with ever-growing wonder and adoration this King of kings and Lord of lords, from whose hands every living soul may take the water of life freely and rejoice in that great "salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."

Let this year's Advent season be spent by us to the best advantage, that our hearts may be made ready for the brightness of His glory and the fulness of His blessing when at last Christmas comes to our door. Let every heart prepare room for the loving, saving and mighty Christ and offer that adoring and grateful homage which He claims.

## THE EVER-ADVANCING CHRIST

**Johnstone G. Patrick, First Presbyterian Church, Sayre, Pennsylvania**

> And when He had gone a little farther . . . He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets. And straightway He called them; and they . . . went after Him. Mark 1:19-20.
>
> And He went a little farther and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." Matthew 26:39.

What Sorokin calls "The Crisis of of Age" has been variously named by others. Some thirty or so years ago, Sir Raymond Beazley, the brilliant British historian, was mapping out the blood-stained "Road to Ruin in Europe" and Oswald Spengler, in Germany, was predicting "The Decline of the West." Nearer our own disordered day the publisher of "The Nightmare of American Foreign Policy," a book by Edgar Ansel Mowrer, points out that the present protracted crisis is the most menacing the world has ever known. Christopher Dawson, the clever Catholic historian, speaks of "The Judgment of the Nations," having maybe in mind the saying "the history of the world is the judgment of the world," and

nplying that judgment is now come on all humankind. Herman Rauhning employs the most terrifying hrase, and what may also be the ost fitting phrase of all, "The Rolution of Nihilism." Alfred Noyes, rsaking the fun and frolic of fairynd for a little while, warns us that e have come to "The Edge of the yss." Arnold Toynbee, besides usg the phrase "Challenge to Chrisanity," enumerates twenty-one civiations that have perished, and inks we may be as near to disllution as the Roman Empire in e age of Augustus. Other scholars, ually competent, agree with Toyne that ours may be the next civiltion to smash itself to smithereens. In view of these disturbing opinns of professional historians and ilosophers, a common cleric, who serts that Christ is always advancg in the world, is likely to be bbed an airy-fairy optimist. But ch is so. It was so "in the days of is flesh," it is so now, and ever all be so!

"When He had gone a little farth- . . . He saw James the son of bedee, and John his brother . . . d straightway He called them . . ." ad James not gone far enough? st imagine how far he had gone ready!

He had started journeying — the oment sin hissed in the heart of manity—from his home in heaven. e travelled down through the triarchs, the priests, and the prots. After a journey covering many nturies, he had gone as far as thlehem. There, in a byre belonging to an indifferent innkeeper, he d been born and "bedded in acken." There, too, he had snuggled against the blue gown of his little ther — a country-clean girl — who oned to him and played peep-bo th him, and, after suckling him, shed him to sleep in the cosy cradlg of her young motherhood. To m there, as he lay helpless on the lden grass, came hornyhanded herdsmen from the hills and wise men from the yellowing East, who worshipped him with wide-eyed wonder and presented "unto him gifts: gold and frankincense and myrrh."

According to St. Matthew, his mother and father, in order to protect him from the pogrm Herod's hatred had sparked, fled with him into Egypt, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, 'Out of Egypt did I call My Son.'" Only after two years did they come at length to Nazareth.

In obedience to Jewish law he had been presented in the temple at Jerusalem, and then carried by Mary and Joseph to the tiny town among the gentle Galilean hills. There, where life was very simple, he had grown up and had learned to use a hammer, a chisel, a saw, a plane, and other tools peculiar to the craft of carpentry. He who was to talk about "a man putting his hand to a plough" had himself first fashioned many ploughs and made many handles for hoes and flails. So well had he learned the craft of carpentry at Nazareth, that he could later tell men that he made a yoke for men's souls which was as easy as those yokes he had made of yore for the oxen—yokes that were well-balanced and carefully-shaped so as not to gall the necks of the patient beasts. To him, too, had fallen the tasks of making and mending wooden doors and doorframes, cedar candlesticks, chairs and tables for the houses, tall-boys for ladies and toys for little children. There, in a workshop opening on to the straggling, sleepy street where any chance passer-by might pause to watch him at work, he had learned to distinguish between green and dry wood, to count the cost of building a barn, to add cubits, and to remove specks of sawdust from small spectators' eyes and splinters from his own fingers.

The Gospel of the Incarnation proclaims to us that the greatness of

God, unlike the greatness of mere men, is measured by the distance to which he can stoop. In the Word-made-flesh we see him stooping down to earth in his infinite mercy, and by the sublime act of condescension —the clothing of himself with the vesture of our frail humanity — he shows us how gloriously great he is. In Christ he comes—from a long way off—to earth. When we think of the Incarnation we do well to recall Laurence Housman's hauntingly lovely poem:

Light looked down, and beheld Darkness,
"Thither will I go," said Light.
Peace looked down, and beheld War,
"Thither will I go," said Peace.
Love looked down, and beheld Hatred,
"Thither will I go," said Love.
So came Light, and shone;
So came Peace, and gave rest;
So came Love, and brought Life,
And the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us.

"The folly of God is wiser than the wisdom of men," and the byre at Bethlehem and the carpenter's bench at Nazareth reverse all our human notions of dignity and greatness.

I

But what a far cry it is from the Throne in heaven to a hay-covered crib at Bethlehem and a carpenter's bench at Nazareth! It is far too far a journey for finite thought to traverse. And yet, far as it is, it was by no means far enough for Jesus, Son of God and Son of Man. He stooped still f a r t h e r when, on a memorable day, he put hammer, chisel, saw and plane aside for the last time, shook the wood-shavings from his tunic, set aside the clinging fingers of his mother, said goodbye to her, and "went over the hills and far away."

On leaving Nazareth, the flower-carpeted hill-country home of his heart, he had been baptized—not because he had sins to be sorry for, but "to fulfill all righteousness"—in the muddy river Jordan by his cousin, John the Baptist. Immediately after his baptism, Spirit-filled and Spirit-led, he had spent forty days and forty nights in rocky gorges where no travelled pathways ran. When he had triumphed in the teeth of three tremendous temptations, he began his public ministry and chose to centre it about a little lake—the lovely Lake of Galilee. From its friendly shores he had called Simon and Andrew, who were fishing at the time, to be his friends and followers.

In temperament these two brothers were poles apart. Simon was an impulsive and very impressionable individual, ardent, hopeful and irascible. Andrew, on the other hand was a quiet, unassuming fellow with a rare genius for personal and practical action, and a fine facility for friendship. In uniting to himself those two brothers, whose kinship makes their dissimilarity all the more striking, Jesus had indeed gone far, but not yet quite far enough.

"It takes all sorts of people to make a world." So we often say when, in a somewhat tolerant mood, we talk about the person whom we probably would never think of inviting to a dinner-party. "Well," we say, with a whimsical smile and a wagging of the head, "it takes, you know, all sorts of people to make a world!"

And it takes all sorts of people too, to make a Church and a definition of Christianity; men of thought and men of action, quiet people and loud people, those who like to take a back seat and those who shove themselves right up to the front, the light-hearted and the sober-minded conformists and non-conformists, prophets, priests, and kings, the poetic and the prosaic, the old with their dreams and the young with their visions, Orientals and Occ

dentals, men and women, boys and girls. It certainly does take all sorts of mind and heart, temperament and training, to make a definition of Christianity and a Church.

So Jesus, "when he had gone a little farther," after calling Simon and Andrew, "he saw James . . . and John his brother . . . and straightway called them . . ." That "little farther," although it did not mean the completion of the inner circle of Christ's friendship, meant more to him—very much more—than the mere words of men will ever express. It meant, however, that in James, who became a pillar of the Christian Church in "the glad, confident morning" of his life, Jesus was able to demonstrate that he had not come "to destroy, but fulfil" the flaming powers at work in an enthusiast. In the disciple who is distinguished as "the disciple whom Jesus loved," the Master of men found one whose friendship never failed him. John was the only one of the intimate inner circle of the Twelve who was to remain loyal to the bitter end. Scared and scattered by the happenings of Holy Week all his disciples—all except John—forsook him and fled." The very earth itself shuddered with the shock of the conflict, but with all its terrors the Cross proved powerless to dislodge John or damage his devotion. With Mary-the-mother-of-Jesus, Mary the wife of Cleopas, Mary Magdalene, and some other women, John was to stand by the Cross—the storm-center in the history of "man's inhumanity to man."

II

Of course, we should remember—and keep on remembering—that Jesus was always going farther. What is more, he is still going farther and will yet go farther, for "he is the same, yesterday, today, and for ever." "In the days of his flesh" he went further along the way of God's will and God's goodness—farther than anyone had ever gone before, farther than anyone has ever gone since. He radiated goodness; he was so genuine that God shone out of him. There was not a false note in his make-up. He was in perfect harmony with God; talked to him, listened to him, was guided by him, obeyed him, loved him. Wherever you find Jesus as you read the "Little Lives" of him in the Bible—sitting on the coping-stone of a well in Samaria, teaching on a hillside or in a synagogue, talking in the marketplace with a tousle-headed child upon his knee, walking with friends towards Bethany, eating and drinking with publicans and sinners, healing and helping some unfortunate fellow, sweating as it were great drops of blood in a garden, quick and quivering on a Cross—you cannot fail to feel the force of his utter goodness. In him the love of God had a body, breathed, walked and talked and listened, had hands and feet, a face, two lovely eyes to look into, and a heart. "The Word"—"Love"—"was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory," wrote John, "the glory as it were of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." No wonder we still sing, "There was no other good enough . . ."

Would you, knowing what Jesus knew, have chosen Judas Iscariot to be one of your friends? Just how far he went when he called this unfortunate fellow from Kerioth to be "one of the Twelve" we shall never know. But this much we do know, that in the garden where this apostle became apostate, his Master "went a little farther and fell on his face and prayed, saying, "O My Father . ." And that "little farther" was a long way—a very long way.

In recording this great crisis in the earthly life of our Lord, St. Luke is more precise in his account than St. Matthew was in his. St. Luke says that Jesus told his three friends to "Pray . . ." and then "he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast . . ." According to St. Matthew, after telling his companions how

heavy of heart he was, he told them to "tarry . . . and watch." "And he went a little farther."

III

Just think what those few steps, that "stone's cast," that "little farther," meant for Christ, for you and me, and for the whole world! The world's redemption depended upon that "little farther." Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jerusalem, the Son of God and the Son of Man, the Sermon on the Mount, the Parables, the Lord's Prayer and the Intercessory Prayer, the "signs and wonders" he did, the Last Supper—all would have been lost to the world if Jesus had refused to take the last steps along the way of God's will that led him through Gethsemane to Gabbatha and Golgotha.

While Peter, James and John were snatching a few fitful moments of sleep, their Master was praying and sweating under the heavy leafage of the olive-trees. Vast distances separate those who sleep, who are unconscious of the awful needs of the hour, from those who pray, who are alive with agonizing activity in the behalf of others. Although he was just as wearied and worn-out as his three disciples, Jesus found the energy and time to pray the most profound prayer ever fashioned by human lips: "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

Innumerable times we have prayed to God this prayer, "Thy will be done." But not once have we really meant it. Our Lord prayed the prayer three times in the garden of his agony, and he meant it so much that he gave himself wholly, really, and without make-believe to death in order to answer it. Such a thought must have hurled itself into the sensitive mind and heart of Josepha Grace, a little known poetess, who wrote in the now-defunct journal, "Decachord":

He, too, saw rain and marked
the hazard flight
Of sparrows in the sun;
Touched dew-wet grasses, knew
the frail delight
Of cobwebs silver-spun;
Yet, softly, in Gethsemane one
night
He prayed: "Thy will be done."
So I, who love the feel of
silk, the sleek
Clean strength of things that
run
Against the wind—O Lord, if
death should seek
Me out ere fame be won,
Grant me but breath and time
enough to speak
These words: "Thy will be
done."
For in Thy will alone is found
the key
That fits the casket of Eternity!

Sometimes the sceptic sneers at the man who talks about doing God's will. "How do you know," he asks him, "what the will of God is?" It is a difficult question and there is no easy answer to it. The will of God is hard to discover, and there is no question about our ability to misinterpret our own will as God's will. More than that, we can become oppressively pious about it. But we may be sure of one thing, we shall never make much progress along the way of God and goodness, either in individual or national life, so long as we refuse to go seeking, first, "the Kingdom of God and his righteousness." We shall make enough mistakes trying to do God's will, but we will perish—and our unhappy world with us—if we persist in making our own plans, in pursuing our own petty purposes, in plotting our own crazy courses. Standing at the crossroads—at wit's-end corner, if you like—not knowing which turn to take, we shall get nowhere and then blame everybody and everything but ourselves and our own folly for our failure, unless we try to find out what is the right thing to do. "Lord," prayed St. Paul once, "what wilt Thou have me

do." And we with all our faults d foolishness will have to pray the me prayer sincerely and seriously, th all our heart.

IV

What praying "Thy will be done" ll mean for you and me, for our untry, and for our world, we do t know. But we do know what it ant for Jesus. It meant for him a rifice of himself—the Sacrifice of rifices. Yet in death, as in life, he f whom "the morning stars sang gether"—went farther along the way God's will. When he hung quick d quivering on the grisly, blood-ked Roman gibbet he found it in s huge heart of love to pray for rgiveness for those who feasted ir fury on him. "Father, forgive m, they do not know what they doing!" When the temple of his dy was being torn in two, to save world from itself and its sins, he k infinite pains to find a place in radise for a common criminal who d been compassionate to him.

When our Lord "humbled himself, coming obedient unto death—the ath of the Cross," he went farther ng the way of God's will than all ransomed ones will ever realize. t even the Cross, with all its shame, pain of body and pain of heart, th its thorns and nails, with its od and bestiality, with its passion d prayers, with its desolation and drama, with its tussle and its umph, was not far enough for One o was doing the will and the work the Father who sent him. Death s the life of man of its rhyme d reason, mars its meaning, and aches it of its best colors. So us went a "little farther." He har-wed hell, in the phrase of our for-ars in the faith, and hurried back m his victory over darkness and ath—clad in the garments of his rious resurrection—with light and , Eternal Light and Eternal Life, his torn hands for all who will e the trouble to take them from n. On the Third Day, God be thanked, "he brought life and immortality to light." In going what was really "a great deal farther," he has robbed the grave of its gloom for every friend and follower.

Nothing—not even sin in its surliest mood, not even death at the hands of those he came to heal and help, not even hell itself—could hinder or hamper the ever-advancing Christ! And what is more, none of these things will ever impede the progress of his living Body, the Christian Church. That, of course, means you and me, and all who are like us. He and his Church, in spite of so many seeming insuperable and insurmountable barriers, are still advancing and will yet advance farther.

Christ and his Church go on through our increasing knowledge; the revelation of a vaster universe demands a more wonderful Creator. Macrocosm and microcosm, as science unveils their closely-kept secrets, cry out that these are but "the outskirts of God's ways. When the mind of mere man is staggered by the immensities, the mind of Christ is not mesmerized by mathematics; he proclaims anew the infinite and incalculable worth of one human soul. When our achievements promote pride and men thin down their religion, emptying the great gospel words of all save their human connotation, he goes on through their swift disillusionment toward his great goal. Everywhere Christ is advancing. Through the surmise of the poet, the thinking of the philosopher, the experiment of the scientist; through every scheme for the social betterment of men; through defeats that deny and victories that affirm; through our discontent with all that falls short of him, the eternal Christ advances, moves on and on and on. In one form he appears, then in another; through one institution he works his all-wise way, then through another; divinely careless of all his foes today—as he was with his foes only yesterday—so that man at last

may be one with his wonderful Maker, God.

We make no fetish of human progress, but even a cursory survey of the past two thousand years yields proof that since he walked this earth, and "under these ordinary skies," a power born of his spirit has never ceased to cleanse and strengthen human life.

The Church's task today was never better delineated and depicted than in Byron's poem, "The Prisoner of Chillon." It is in this work that the wayward poet tells the story—a pathetic story—of a man shut away in a dungeon who, on the death of his sole companion, was left disconsolate beyond words. At length, however, the prisoner saw that the stones of his dungeon had parted at a certain place and left a rift in the wall. He climbed upward wearily, dragging his chafing chain after him, and looked through. O joy unspeakable! He saw again the green fields and the beautifully blue sky. And as he clung there, gazing through his tears, a bird began to sing beneath the dungeon-wall,

> A lovely bird with azure wings,
> And song that said a thousand things,
> And seemed to say them all to me.

The dearest duty and divinest privilege that earth affords you and me, if we only knew it, is to lift the sad and the sinful, the discouraged, the despairing and the dispossessed, all frightened and fettered folk, up to the "rift" in their dungeon wall. For, in so doing, we shall open before their bleary and bloodshot eyes, not a glimpse of green fields and a beautifully blue sky, but the vision splendid of that Certain One Who is saying, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

The Christian life is a pilgrim's progress

> **from** and **to,**
> **with** and **through.**

It is a journeying **from** self and sin **to** God; it is a journey undertaken **with** Christ **through** the various vicissitudes of life. Christians cannot stand still. They must not become an easy prey to petrified and crystallized ideas that belong to a dead past. They must break new ground; they must open their minds to new ideas, but which are neither new nor old. They are facets of eternal truth which always has been and which always will be. Eternal truth cannot change, for, as with Christ its most perfect personification, it is "the same yesterday, today, and forever." It is we who change and are changed; it is we who **must** change and be changed. We cannot and we must not any longer mark time intellectually or spiritually.

Only by journeying with Jesus will we find that which our torn and tortured world needs. We shall be blind and stupid if we fetter this living opportunity to innumerable dead blunders. Rise, then, let us be going along the way of God's will and God's goodness! We have got a long, long way to go yet with that One, for whom a long, long way is only "a little farther." But when we have climbed the last hill and negotiated the last valley—the Valley of the Shadow—we shall emerge into the sunshine on the other side, and arrive Home at last!

## HERALDS OF JOY

**Donald Macleod, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey**

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. Luke 2:10

Few people read the poetry of Lord Tennyson today. Many know, however, how his life was almost broken in 1833 when his brilliant

oung college friend, Arthur Hallam, ed suddenly at the early age of venty-three. Hallam was engaged to ennyson's sister Emily. And in his lebrated poem, "In Memoriam," the oet describes how gloomy was their rst Christmas after Hallam's bright pirit was no longer there.

With trembling fingers did we weave
The holly round the Christmas hearth;
A rainy cloud possessed the earth
And sadly fell our Christmas Eve.

ut then through his faith in the od of Love, he rose above his sorw and went on to write these stirng and triumphant lines:

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,
Draw forth the cheerful day from night;
O Father, touch the east, and light
The light that shone when Hope was born.

ears later in talking to a friend ennyson said, "To feel that God is my side just as much as you are, at is the very joy of my heart."

Once again it is Christmas, and fortunately it finds many folk dessed, indifferent, and far from thusiastic. During recent years en Christian people have allowed emselves to be caught in emotional drums and are taking a rather mbre view of life. They have given to the mood that surrounds them. ey have been appalled by the way igion is neglected, by the irresponsility of public servants entrusted h the nation's destiny, by the lack moral quality in social life; and y feel they are set down in a sinful e upon which God's word of judgnt is about to be spoken.

But all this is not new. The world o which Jesus came over nineteen nturies ago was similar in many pects: it was dispirited, morally fuddled, and tired. People had chosen and set up their own gods, but instead of insuring their present and future, they let them down with a sickening jolt. And what was more, a spiritually-impoverished generation had nothing to put in their place. The Stoics were the only ones who were putting up a bold front to life, but inwardly they too were creatures of despair. People talked about events that were reminiscent of the good old days, but they could not shut their eyes to the moral decay, corruption, and fear that prevailed all round them.

Then suddenly into that sad and disillusioned world there burst an angel song, "Fear not: for, behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." And from then onwards, across the pages of the New Testament there ran with ever-increasing brightness this theme of joy. Indeed the words "rejoice" and "joy" are found more than fifty times there. Remember, for example, how the disciples returned with joy from their first attempt to declare the Gospel to men. Or how Jesus spoke of the joy in heaven over the repentance of one sinner. After the Resurrection the disciples returned to Jerusalem with great joy. Paul, moreover, gave to the Galatians a list of the fruits of the Spirit, and the second in order was joy. Then, as the great drama of the New Testament closes, St. John the Divine sees a vision of all the redeemed in heaven singing joyfully: "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever."

In view of all this it is true to say that if our Christianity is not joyous, it is not real. James S. Stewart of Edinburgh says, "Joy is the flag flying from the battlements of the Christian heart to show that the King is there." If you and I are gloomy today, meeting life with a long face, haunted by fears from which you shrink, it is more than likely that our religion has become mediocre and has lost

the radiance and vitality that sent the first Christians into the world with joy and singing because the King of kings was in their hearts.

This Christmas will have done much for you and me and all the world if the spirit of real joy, which first gripped the shepherds long years ago in Bethlehem, will so thrill our hearts that in these uncertain times we shall shout triumphantly:

Joy to the world! the Lord is come:
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing.

Let us examine this Christmas joy for a moment and see what is its meaning for all of us now.

I

Christmas joy is the joy of Creation.

The great Indian poet, Rabindrinath Tagore, spoke of joy as the motive and cause of the creation of the world. And John Milton wrote that the angels' song at Bethlehem was equalled only by the joyful "music of the spheres" when first God made the world. Joy belongs to the act of creation. Pleasure, on the other hand, is merely a feeling of lightheartedness that withers whenever trouble and failure strike. But joy comes when we are creative, even if the world is against us. Joy is the glad feeling we have when we know we are in harmony with the mind of God and doing what he wishes to see done. And whenever we cease to be creative we reduce to a minimum our chances for real and lasting joy.

Remember how joy was the distinguishing mark of the Christian Church as long as it was growing and expanding creatively. But the time came when the Church ceased to grow except in wealth and external power. Then came dogmatism, ignorance, worldliness, stagnation—and joy fled. But God had set the Church—and you and me—into the world to create, but not in a self-generating or self-perpetuating sense; we were expected to draw upon resources above ourselves. And in drawing on this power above ourselves we take it into ourselves. We raise ourselves above ourselves. Ours is the choice to crawl or climb. That was the trouble with old Scrooge in Dickens, "Christmas Carol." He was a grouch, a parasite upon human society, to whom the joy of being a creative individual was sheer humbug. But when the spirit of Christmas touched his heart, he was lifted above his old self and he became spiritually creative, and wherever he touched the world, things became different, and his joy was boundless.

A man growled at his neighbor one day and said, "This is a rotten world; I could make a better one myself." "That's just what we are here for," replied his neighbor "Let's do it!"

It was this joy of creating that Dr. William DeWitt Hyde had in mind when he wrote that stirring hymn:

Creation's Lord, we give Thee thanks
That this Thy world is incomplete;
That battle calls our marshalled ranks;
That work awaits our hands and feet.

II

Christmas joy is the joy of redemption.

Someone has asked, "What makes Merry Christmas merry?" Another has answered, "It is the Christmas heart." Many years ago an Anglican clergyman by the name of Willetts delivered a lecture which he entitled "Sunshine" and he said, 'The seat of happiness is not in the bank vault, but in the little spot under the jacket called the heart." This was the message the first Christmas heralds declared to people who were despondent and distressed. Joy was related to and dependent upon a process that began from within. This process pointed up the simple fact that when the heart is changed by Christ, this

old world becomes new because you and I have become new.

Dr. Maltby said, "Jesus promised his disciples three things: that they would be entirely fearless, absurdly happy, and in constant trouble." The fact that they were always in trouble in no way interferred with their joy. In the worst of circumstances, victims of floggings and stonings, or flung into the mud and scum of dungeons, they sang with joy, "Glory be to Thee, O God! Glory be to Thee, O Christ!" Their joy was the by-product of losing themselves in order that they might see the realization of the Gospel of Christ in the changed lives of others. This is the incandescent joy which Christmas brought to the world; it is the happy satisfaction of sharing our changed lives with others in order that the salvation we have known might be their possession too.

We are told that when the British Government proclaimed freedom for the slaves on the Island of Jamaica in 1834, the poor creatures climbed to the highest hilltop on the night of July 31 so that they might not miss one second of that wonderful first day of freedom, the day of their deliverance. And the moment the August sun rose above the horizon of the sea, they sang, they laughed, they wept, they fell upon their knees, they threw their arms about each other, and all the while they shouted: "Free! Free! Free!"

It was a song of the world's redemption, of its spiritual freedom, that was proclaimed at Bethlehem. And whenever the memory of the first Christmas returns, you and I are called to live afresh by its truth and to share the wonder and miracle of power and grace. Then we can know the incomparable joy of seeing men and women everywhere set free from sin and fear.

III

The Christmas joy is the joy of fulfillment.

Bring together the joy of creation and the joy of redemption and you have the joy of fulfillment. What were the good tidings of great joy which the angels declared? "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour . . ." The song of joy comes to its fulfillment when the child of Bethlehem becomes the Saviour of the world. Alexander Maclaren wrote, "Christ is the measure of a man's capacities." The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews said, "Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross . . ." But you protest—why interject a cross into the glad atmosphere of Christmas? I grant you that the sight of a man upon a cross does not arouse in us much joy. But look at it this way: See the child of Bethlehem grown to manhood and as the Divine Hero of the human race he dies in the fierce moral battle against the enemies of all goodness, love, and truth, but he conquers as he dies. Can you look at that and not see the cross, the symbol of death, being transformed by his triumph into a symbol of joy? It is the joy of one who had followed God's will through to the end and had seen all his faith and trust in his Father vindicated at last. This is the joy which his birth promised to men at the first Christmas. This is the joy the world by itself can neither give nor take away. A Christmas carol puts this thought clearly:

God comes down that man
may rise,
Lifted by him to the skies;
Christ is Son of Man that we
Sons of God in him may be.

Among the poignant stories about the Scottish Covenanters is one of that cold December day in Edinburgh in 1666 when Hugh Mackail, the youngest and bravest among the preachers, was carried before his judges and sentenced to death. They gave him four days to live. Then the soldiers dragged him back to jail. He looked so young to be condemned to this terrible fate that many in the crowd were weeping. But on his face

there shone a radiant eagerness and he cried out to the crowd, "Trust in God! Trust in God!" Then suddenly he caught a glimpse of a friend in the crowd, and he shouted, "Good news! Good news! I am within four days journey of enjoying the sight of Jesus Christ!"

Joy? Yes! When God's work for us demands all we have and all we are, there is no greater joy than, having given all, to see His purpose realized and fulfilled in His world.

## THE STORY OF THE WISE MEN

Theodore P. Ferris, Trinity Church, Boston, Massachusetts

This sermon is a quiet meditation on the Story of the Wise Men, a story in which fact and legend are so perfectly and beautifully blended that it is almost impossible to tell the one from the other.

I

It is a story, first of all, about men who studied the stars. We do not know how many men there were, or what their names were, or what they were like. Later legends have supplied a great many of those facts and given the men names and numbers and even thrones, but in Matthew's original story they are nameless, numberless and throneless — merely "wise men from the east." We do know, however, that they studied the stars. Men have always been fascinated by the stars and it is not hard to see why: by their beauty, if by nothing else; by their arrangement in patterns, patterns as simple and familiar as a dipper in a woman's kitchen, or a hunter's belt and horn; and by their movements which are regular and marvelous to watch.

The men in the story studied the stars seriously, just as seriously as we do, but not exactly the way we study them. We study the stars, if we study them at all, to find out more about the stars, how large they are, how far away they are, how long it takes the light to travel from the star to us, and if there is any life on the star what it is like. They, on the other hand, studied the stars to find out more about their own world. From their observations they knew that heavenly bodies had a great deal to do with human lives. They could see that if the sun failed the crops failed, and they suspected that the full moon had something to do with the unusually high tide. It is easy to see how they came to believe that the stars had some direct control over human lives, and that by studying the stars they could predict human events. This was astrology. And this was where it began, in Babylonia, where these men lived.

The men in the story, like a great many others, were looking for the Man who would set the world to rights and, instead of looking for him in the life that was going on all around them, they looked in the sky and watched the stars. One night they saw the star they were looking for, rising in the East. It was a sure sign to them that the Man they were looking for had come.

Pause just a moment in the story to see that these men had a glimpse of a great truth. The truth is difficult to put it into words because when you put it into words you somehow tell only half of it. They had a glimpse of the truth that man is never completely his own master, never completely free to go his own way; that there are influences in a man's life that are beyond his control. "There is a tide in the affairs of men." "There is a divinity that shapes our ends." There is a climate that affects our disposition and our way of life. There is a past that partly determines our present. There is a

od whose eyes did see our sub-ance, yet being imperfect. This is e truth that the Wise Men had a impse of and that we with our assion for independence and free-om are all too likely to forget.

At the same time, the Wise Men arn us against two things. The first the temptation to pry too much to the future. They were predicting e future by the stars and there are great many people now who would se to predict the future, by the ars or by any other means, if they uld. They are impatient to know hat is going to happen, but the ture has been largely hidden from by the wisdom of God. Let it re-ain hidden until God chooses to veal it. There are some things, of urse, we can know about the future putting two and two together and sing our common sense. But the arning of the Wise Men is not to y to see too far ahead, farther than od intends us to see. You remember w Jesus' enthusiastic followers anted to know when the great re-lution would come. Jesus said uietly, "It is not for you to know e times or the seasons." There they t the matter drop.

The other warning is against the mptation to count too much on the ars to tell us what to do. In ancient nes when people had a decision make they went to the priest, and e priest had two ways to find out e answer to their question. One was look carefully at the stars, and e other was to study the entrails of animal. I think most of us have ven up the latter method of inquiry, t a great many people still cling the former. We are constantly told our amazement that there are men high positions in Washington who ever make a major decision without nsulting one of the people there ho pretend to know by looking at e stars on the lines in a man's hand hat the man should do, and when.

We do not presume to pass judg-ent on the sincerity of these men. We do presume to answer the question, Why shouldn't they do it? What is the danger in horoscopes and all that they stand for? It is the danger of substituting impersonal directions for personal decisions. It is the danger of letting the stars do your thinking for you. It is the danger of becoming the slave to an impersonal fate instead of the child of a personal God.

When Jesus went into the Garden of Gethsemane to work out the major decision of his life he did not turn to the stars, he turned to his Father. And he found the answer in Him.

II

If the Wise Men had not done anything but study the stars we probably would never have heard of them. But the story goes on to tell how they followed a particular star. When they saw the star that they were looking for they stopped studying and began traveling. There are a great many lesson which we might draw from that but we will not pause to do so now. Only to say this: there is a time to be quiet and a time to be active, a time to sit still and a time to be up and doing. The wise man is the man who knows when to do which. Perhaps that is one reason why these men were called wise.

They left their comfortable homes and turned westward toward the unpredictable dangers of the desert. You remember how T. S. Eliot's poem begins:

> A cold coming we had of it,
> Just the worst time of the year
> For a journey, and such a long journey:
> The ways deep and the weather sharp,
> The very dead of winter . . .
> A hard time we had of it.

And this makes us think immediately of a strange fact about human beings. I say strange because it is one of those things that you wouldn't think of if you didn't know it. Human beings have a way of reaching for

things that are beyond them. No matter how many obstacles may be in the way, or how dangerous the path may be, human beings have an irresistible desire to reach for that which is far beyond their grasp. They keep climbing Mount Everest until they get to the top; they keep skirting around the dangerous ice floes of the Antarctic until they reach the South Pole. They keep swimming farther and farther, and risking greater and greater dangers, until they swim the Hellespont, and then the English Channel, and then begin to look for another body of water to conquer. They keep making rockets until they make one that will hit the moon.

In other words, we belong to that strange tribe of creatures who are not only fascinated by the stars but who follow them. Danger does not daunt us. Quite to the contrary, it dares us. Some of us, of course, are more daring than others. There are not many Sir Edmund Hillarys among us, but we all have a portion of this spirit of adventure.

Now, without preparing the way for this statement, and without saying anything further to prepare the way for it, I am going to make a statement which I hope you will think about during the weeks that immediately follow. The supreme adventure of our time is not to find a way to the moon, but to find a way for human beings to live together on this earth in peace. I am not saying that in depreciation of the efforts to find a way to the moon; that is not in my mind at all. But I am saying that the supreme adventure of our time is not an adventure in the material universe but an adventure in the spiritual life of humanity. How can so many people, with so many different interests, from so many different backgrounds and cultures, speaking so many different languages, holding so many different political points of view, thinking in so many different ways, behaving in so many different ways, how can they live so close together in peace?

This adventure calls for more daring, more imagination, more sacrifice, than any mountain, sea, or star ever called for. When you set out to bring together the great nations of the world and help them find ways and means for settling their differences, you go right straight out on a limb. And the more daring your suggestions are, the more likely the limb is to be lopped off! Your supreme adventure is to do your part to make this earth habitable. And you will begin in the only place that any of us can begin, in your own home, to bring together the people that are within those four walls into such a community that people can say, "These are people who have learned in spite of their differences to live together in relative peace and in happiness."

III

You can see now, I hope, why the story of the Wise Men has always been one of the most popular stories in the Bible. It appeals to some of the very deepest things in us, our curiosity, our thirst for adventure, our willingness to risk everything in our search for the highest. But there is one other reason. It is the story of men who found what they were looking for. These men traveled west as far as they could, by land at least, and then they did what any sensible person would do, they inquired in Jerusalem. They were sent by a distraught king to Bethlehem, and there they found a young mother and a Baby. They presented their gifts, and went back home another way.

Were they disappointed? Did they wish they had stayed home and never made the effort of the journey or submitted themselves to the trials and hardships that were involved in it? Did they say to themselves that it was hardly worth it? So much for so little? Did it seem to them that what they found in Bethlehem was an anti-climax to all their searching?

did they know what they found there? We shall never know the answer to these questions. But we do know that the people who told the story (and this is the important thing, the thing that I always try to dwell on when I am talking about one of these stories in the Gospels) told it because they believed that Jesus is the end of every man's search. They told it because they believed that in him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily," that in him was gathered together the essence of life, as if in a core, so that it could burn and live. They told it because they believed that in him "the hopes and fears of all the years are met." They told it because they believed sincerely that he must increase and all others decrease.

This is difficult for a great many people today—if they are honest with themselves, especially for educated people, and people who want to be world-wide in their interest and broad in their appreciation of religions different from their own. This seems to them at first sight, at any rate, a very narrow point of view, saying that he who is the center of our religion is necessarily the center of religion for everyone and that all others must be secondary to him. No matter how much they think of Jesus they find it almost impossible to think that only in Jesus can men find the life that is free from the tyranny of sin.

The answer to their questions is not an answer that can be put into a few words. More and more, as I look at life around me not only in my own day but in previous years, I am impressed by the fact that God works in singularities as well as in multitudes, that He reveals Himself more intensely in the One than in the many. For instance, there were many poets in ancient times, but there was only one Homer who sang the way Homer sang. There were many nations in ancient days, but only one Israel that did what Israel did. There were many musicians, but only one Bach. There were many explorers, but only one Columbus. There are many good men but only one Jesus, only one Sermon on the Mount, only one Parable of the Prodigal Son, only one Gethsemane, one Calvary, one empty tomb. God reveals Himself in the many, in all the variety of human life, but the fullness of Himself can only be fully revealed in a single life, and that life is Jesus.

To an open house in the evening
Home shall men come
To an older place than Eden
And a taller town than Rome.
To the end of the way of the wandering star
To the things that cannot be and that are.
To the place where God was homeless
And all men are at home.

## WHY THE ANGELS SANG

Lowell M. Atkinson, First Methodist Church, Englewood, New Jersey

I want to tell you why the angels sang. The angels sang because they knew.

The one characteristic of angels is that they are a higher range of being who have knowledge where we only have faith. Because they knew what God was doing and what God is like, because they knew the innermost workings of His mind, and the far reach of His plans and purposes, because they knew that His mighty outstretched arm now was to reach to needful man, and do the one thing required to redeem and reclaim and save a lost race, because they knew these things, the angels sang!

A newspaper used to have a feature

called "There is good news today." Although a newspaper may not always seem the best place to look for good news (because it gives us mostly bad news), still it is a heartening thing to think that there is good news today. But far more heartening is the thought that there is good news every day, and good news forever, and good news always, because the universe is sound at heart and there is a golden splendor of meaning in the purpose that is being beaten out on the anvil of history by the mighty arm of our God. The angels sang because they knew. They knew that the good news and the good tidings of great joy are permanent and belong in the very structure of this universe. All this has been made known to us, and this is the heart of the meaning of Christmas. It has been made known to us as God's own revelation. And with what heavenly simplicity, for it all came in terms that we can so completely understand. It came in the person of the little Babe of Bethlehem.

"Here's the wonder never known,
A King a manger makes His throne."

A great Christian leader once said, "For the whole world is in the darkness of a fearful night except as it remembers the good news of the first Christmas and is rededicated to the service of the Prince of Peace, whose star shines steady in the winter sky." The world is indeed in bleakness and in darkness, its philosophy of life blot and blank and dreary enough, unless there is this good tidings written across the very character of God for all the world to know, even as the angels know. And all this touches our life with a great hope and sets all life glowing.

The other day I read once again the legend of the glow-worm. The glow-worm, which, we are told, is actually not a worm, but a little tiny beetle, was present at the time of the first Christmas. It saw the light in the sky. It saw the shepherds march the road to Bethlehem. It saw the great Magi from the East, with their pomp and their splendor make their way to Bethlehem also, to lay their gifts before the little Baby.

The tiny glow-worm at that time did not have a light that made it glow. It was a very ordinary insect, yet it felt the glory and thrill of all this, and wondered if it too somehow could not go to the little manger, and perhaps even bring a little gift. It was a long journey for this tiny beetle and it could move only slowly, but it made its way by day and by night. It had saved up as a kind of a hoard against a bad day, a seed of grain. This was the only thing it could think of, to bring as a gift to the Christ Child—this one treasure—this seed of grain. And so, laboriously, the glow-worm made its way, pushing, carrying, pulling and dragging this treasure to give to the little Christ Child.

And at last it was there in His presence. The Babe was lying in the manger. There were animals there. Mary and Joseph were there. The little glow-worm was there, too. And with one supreme effort it pushed its treasure up almost to the hand of the little Christ Child. Now the glow-worm was so small that a human eye could hardly see it. But the Baby Jesus saw it. And it seemed for a moment as if there was a little smile on the Baby's face—a very friendly, happy, loving smile. And a tiny hand reached out—at least it seemed so—and touched that tiny little bug. Immediately the beetle began to glow with happiness and joy, in response to the Christ Child's love. It has been glowing ever since.

Any person who brings his treasure to Christ, who feels the touch of that little Baby hand, knows what it means to glow like the glow-worm, with love and with radiance and with happiness always. Let us come to Christ this Christmastide. He is eager

o bless us with His love. He can et our lives aglow. And, like the angels, we shall ever chorus His praise, because we know!

## ON GIFTS AND GIVING

Gene E. Bartlett, First Baptist Church, Los Angeles, California

### I. Christ Comes to Us All

The coming of Christ has always been a source of wonder. From the very beginning men have sought to understand what it all means. In the New Testament there has been left for us the sum of their wondering. One great conclusion has been kept for us in the opening verses of the Gospel of Matthew. The writer has preserved a tradition that the angel came and proclaimed to Mary that she would bear a son. Then the angel said, "And his name shall be called Emmanuel which means, God with us."

But is Christ's name still Emmanuel in a scientific, city-dwelling time like ours? To this we must give our answer, Christ is still Emmanuel, God with us, bringing certain wonderful gifts to human life.

I

First of all, through Christ God has given us a way to understand Him.

Justin Wroe Nixon has put it in a personal incident. Some years ago he stopped on the South rim of the Grand Canyon to see this wonder of nature. To his great disappointment he discovered that there was a haze in the atmosphere and the colors and strata of the canyon were obscured. Then one of the guides led him to a mirror which was polarized. This gave it the quality of penetrating through the haze and the mists so that the viewer could see the color and the formations clearly. So, said Nixon, Christ has meant that to men needing understanding of God. Finding many doubts and uncertainties clouding the way, they have gratefully turned to Christ and seen in Him the reflection of God Himself.

It had to be in a life. Nothing becomes clear until it is. Years ago in my desire to understand human behavior I took graduate work in psychology. It took me in to a laboratory where experimentation was going on. When the course was over the teacher said that he was glad that I had come because at least I had some view of the attempt to understand human behavior. But actually, I wasn't really growing in my understanding of men, only in some of their reactions. You will never come to understand men in a laboratory but only in the whole of life and face to face. Neither will we come to know God by principles of theological concepts or doctrines alone. Most of all, we know Him through One who walked among us and shared our lives, our needs, our hopes and our fears. His name shall be Emmanuel both then and now, for this is God with us, giving us a way to understand Him.

II

Again, in Christ God has given us a way to live freer lives. The first word proclaimed by Jesus was the promise of release. "He has sent me to proclaim release to the captive, to set at liberty them that are bruised." That proclamation of emancipation is very close to the heart of the Christian Gospel, for men and women are bound on every side. Some are bound by poverty. Others are bound by ignorance. We are prisoners of habits, physical and emotional, which shackle our lives. We are shut in by illness. We are hampered by sin. Not a man walks upon the earth who does not have his struggle in some way to be free. What a word there is that has come to us then that in Jesus Christ God has proclaimed

Himself the great Ally of freedom.

Then, why aren't we free? Why do so many of us miss it? Could it be that we tend too much to quibble about the terms that Christ gives us? Did you ever wonder what you would have done if you had been one of those who met Christ and been offered release by His hand? Take the man who was carried by his friends and lowered through the roof to be healed. I can imagine that if some of us had been in his place, we would have quibbled about the terms. "Take up your bed and walk," said Jesus. Some of us might well have said, "But, Master, why take up my bed? Why can't I just walk?" By our quibbling we might have lost the great opportunity to be free.

This is purely imaginative. What is not imagination is the way in which many of us receive God's gracious acts to set us free. What if He says, "Take up your handicap and walk," instead of letting you be completely free from it. Isn't that still victory? What if He says, "Keep that pain and use it for compassion and understanding. Use it as a source of sympathy." Do we quibble about those terms?

At this Christmas season the word of release is so clear and so pointed. It says, "Oh, never despair, never." For with Christ's coming we know beyond all dispute that it is God Himself who works for our release.

III

Finally, this season is joyous because in Christ God with us gives the assurance of His grace to meet our need. Let us see it for a moment in human relations. Twenty-five years ago, according to a true story, a sociology class in Johns Hopkins University studied a blighted area in the City of Baltimore. They studied the children of the area, their homes, the gangs they ran with, the environment on the street. When the study was completed, two hundred of those cards were placed in a terrifying category, "Headed for jail." Sociologically that seemed to be the prediction. Many factors in the lives of these children pointed that way. Twenty-five years later another class discovered that these cards were still in the files. A curiosity was aroused as to what had happened to those two hundred. Did they come out as predicted? They set out to find as many of them as they could. It was no easy task in our American shifting scene. Yet, by diligent search they found many of them. One by one the investigators came back with the strange story that the prediction had not come true. Whenever they looked for the factor that made the difference, they kept hearing about someone called "Aunt Hannah." This they discovered was the name of a teacher who had been in that area in their growing years. One by one each felt that Aunt Hannah had especially loved him. They told how she would keep the children after school, not to punish but somehow to counsel and to show that she cared. Often she invited them to her home, giving them one of the few square meals they had ever had. They had been redeemed for useful citizenship. The majority had become useful and stable, and something in Aunt Hannah had contributed to it. The remarkable part of it is that one woman could meet the needs of so many different children. You see, there is grace even in human love, and that grace can fill the need, whatever it may be. Aunt Hannah gave to each child what that child needed.

If this quality is found in human love, how much more, infinitely more, is it to be found in God's love! The grace of God that has come to us in Christ is the Divine love moving in with such discernment to fill that very point in your life where you need His grace. It can be courage to those who are afraid and strength to those who are weak. It can be certainty to those who are in doubt and hope to those who are in dark. The assurance of the grace of God has come to us in Jesus Christ.

## II. What's Your Gift

Set deep in the twelfth chapter of omans is a word which is true every ay, but it seems to have a special eaning at the Christmas season. For aul wrote to the Roman's, "Having ifts that differ according to the grace ven to us, let us use them."

First of all, look at this as an ex- ting motive for your daily living. raditionally, we know there are cer- in gifts that God has given to some eople in abundance, and these are be used. But suppose you don't ave an abundant supply of these, ave you no gifts which can be used?

We have had far too narrow a con- pt of what makes a gift that can e used for the glory of God. This as illustrated in a recent interview ith one of the actresses who is aking such a tremendous impression n the stage at the present time. She an Irish actress, Siobhan McKenna. ritics say that her portrayal of Ber- ard Shaw's Saint Joan is one of the assics of our generation. In a recent terview she was asked a number of ersonal questions. In telling why she rought such devotion to her acting e reflected a profound insight. She id that she felt that the purpose f life was to give and that whatever e was doing she would want to ive her best, whether as a seamstress r an actress. Granted that there is enuine authentic native talent, we annot escape the fact that a distinc- ve note has been added when a oman in her professional career inks not first of her success but hether she is giving of her best hatever she may do.

From the time Jesus spoke of the idow's mite through all of the tradi- on of giving evento this very hour, is is the note of profound insight. Whatever you have is a gift and as gift it must be used. In its use it ust be for the glory of God who was e Giver of the gift.

I

In the deeper matters there are me unused gifts which can be tremendous blessings if we will offer them in humility and trust.

One of these, for example, may be the little bit of faith that you have. You may think your faith is small, but, believe me, there are countless people who need it even to the extent you have it. Sometimes you may wonder why Jesus made the striking contrast between the mountain on the one hand and the faith like a mustard seed on the other. Probably it was just the mark of his skillful teaching, making an emphasis by contrast. But it is also a very real description of much human experience. Some of you come to this Christmas time thinking that that is just about the proportion of your need and your faith. Your need is like a mountain; your faith is like a mustard seed. Some people are walking these days overshadowed by towering doubts and fears. There is that sorrow that comes to a heart in the separation from a loved one. And on the other hand there is this faith, seemingly so tiny, so inadequate, yet the word of our Lord is so wonderfully true. The power of even the amount of faith is sufficient to move that mountain. If you have it, then for your sake, for God's sake, and for the sake of the one in need, give it abundantly at this Christmas season. You cannot wait for a faith like a mountain.

Or there is the gift of your suffering. Have you ever thought how that can be used? Someone has said, "Above all, don't waste your suffering." This is a very real wisdom. For suffering which you have had has led you into an experience, terrible as it may have seemed at times, which you can share. You have an understanding. You know what it is to pass through pain. You do not need to wait upon words. Your experience will fill in the gaps. Don't waste your suffering. Ask how God can use it. I am not going to get involved in whether that is the reason God allowed it. I don't know. But I will support the truth that God means for you to

use that suffering. Take the gift, strange as it may seem, and use it to the ends of ministry.

Do you see now why I speak of this as an exciting motive for daily living? Somewhere in every life there is something which can be used. It is meant to be so. We cherish the prayer that at Christmas time we may see what that gift is.

II

Or consider that in using our gifts is a very effective method for making a better world. To be sure, we do need the best thought and the best planning which we can bring to work for a just and peaceful world. But at the same time there is an untapped power in the kind of difference that dedicated people can make as they bring a dedication of their gifts in all their daily work.

Generally when we speak of Christian service we are likely to assume that it means some special ministry. We think of it as serving on a committee, or teaching a Sunday School class, or serving on a church board. Obviously, all of this is exceedingly important in the eyes of any pastor. But perhaps that gives me the right to say that Christian service has a much deeper meaning. It is expressed in the purpose and motive we bring to whatever we do day by day. I believe a Christian is distinguished not so much by the committees on which he serves as the quality he brings to his chosen work. Sometimes when you meet someone in the course of early conversation you will say, "What do you do for a living?" How surprised some would be if we changed that to, What do you do with your living? When thousands of Christians begin to answer that question in terms of the Christian impact upon life, then, believe me, we have come to a revolution of tremendous proportion.

It is the kind of revolution that gives a man a respect for his gift, whatever it is. Even in this day of assembly lines, crowded cities and life in apartment houses, we can still use the spirit of Stradivari who said, "God could not make Antonio's violins without Antonio." Just as it is a basic principle that two objects cannot occupy the same space at the same time, so you have an exclusive right and obligation on that area of life which you occupy. What's your gift, and how are you using it?

Oh, what it can mean if we go forth from the times of worship like this into the life of our community carrying with us a cleaner understanding that we have a gift, that it is to be used for God's sake, and that it must be done day by day. May He who is the greatest Gift of all to the hearts of those who receive Him give us the joy of this daily ministry.

## ALL IS NOW READY

Wesley P. Ford, Central Christian Church, Pasadena, California

Even when the tree is arranged, decorations in place, the guest list complete, and the gifts purchased, most of us come to Christmas feeling unprepared. There is nervousness about having forgotten something. But whether we are ready or not, Christmas comes. And especially if there are children, there comes that dramatic moment when someone says, "All is now ready."

Perhaps it was so with God's preparation for the first Christmas. There came a time when the world was ready. God's prophets had been pointing the way. But there must have been anxiety in the heart of God as He prepared for His most blessed event. One of Jesus' parables captures both the readiness and the expectancy of God. "A man once gave a great banquet and invited

any; and at the time for the banquet sent his servant to say to those ho had been invited, 'Come; for all ready.'"

I

God's reasons for faith in the readiess of the world were not unfounded. The conquering Greeks had left common language. Rome's roads ade for commerce and unitedness. ne Jewish faith had spread abroad ith its expectancy of a Messiah. The ophets had long been pointing the eed for moral stature. Indeed all as ready!

So Christmas came. A child was orn. The earth shaking movement hich transformed the Roman emre and created Christian civilization egan with a mother and a babe. hat great events, what great strides rward have not begun with a moth- and a child? Surely in the heart God this was the fullness of time r such an event.

We cannot minimize what has happened as the result of the first Christas for which the stage was set. But hen we have taken the full count the contribution of Jesus Christ society, it is still short of God's pectation. Christ has made a difrence in the lives of millions of perns. He has influenced every phase organized society for good: art, erature, commerce, business, hools, government. Each of these ould slip back a thousand years if were not for Jesus Christ. But it ust also be said that more is yet ndone than has been done. Jesus id, "The kingdom is at hand." It the hour for good will! Two ousand years after the birth of the nce of Peace who clearly pointed e way to good will among men, tions are still at war and we live fear of our fellow men. Could it e that in spite of the many preparaons, some details were overlooked? The readiness of the world in neral is inadequate unless it inudes the readiness of each of us. here is drama in the fact that on the crowded night in Bethlehem the inn was full. There was no room. So Mary and Joseph had finally to seek the stable. But actually the crowded inn was not a very important fact in the coming of the Christ. It in no sense deterred his arrival. God does not mind the lowly or the uncomfortable. In spite of inconvenience, everything happened on schedule. But the fact of that crowded inn has become a crutch for us. We lean heavily upon it and say the world was not ready for the Christ. He came and his own received him not. He was rejected by men. But today's hope is not rooted in the past tense. What of ourselves? We are today's innkeepers. Is today's world ready to receive him? And what of the detail that concerns our personal preparation? It is easier to prepare a creche for the mantel than to remake our lives until he is at home in the things we say and do.

II

We need a second look at the parable. The host said, "Come, for all is ready." But they began to make excuses. One said, "I have bought a field." It was the time for making his investment. He must look after them. Another said, "I have bought five yoke of oxen." One wonders what the horsepower of his new vehicle was. But he had made a new purchase, so had other things to do. The third had married and was just too busy with things at home. It is good that persons are busy at home. Home ought to be a place of much activity. But a home without time to accept God's invitation becomes, in the long run, a rather shallow affair.

So, like the banquet host, God was saying, "All is now ready." He had done what He could. But men and women were busy. The angels sang that night. There was a hallelujah chorus. God had planned it so, for He belieevd the world was ready. But many did not hear for they were listening to nickelodeons and juke

boxes. You see, even for an event of this stature, God cannot do it all.

III

If we would share with God in preparation for the coming of the Christ, I think of at least three essentials. One is the possession of a triumphant faith. Not faith in ourselves or things, but faith which makes us depend upon God. Hellmuth Gollwitzer in "Unwilling Journey" tells of his experiences with a band of prisoners in Russia at the end of World War II. He described their bleakest Christmas. They had not a thing to give to each other as gifts. But they discovered one thing they could give. They cut little pieces of wood and on them inscribed the promises of God. These they passed among themselves. And those promises became life and health and peace and hope for the prisoners. What if we were left with nothing but the promises of God? Maybe it would be to discover the meaning of life.

Through the centuries God has spoken and sensitive souls have heard and said, "The Lord is my shepherd." If the Lord is my shepherd, then the best is yet to be. Each tomorrow has a brighter sky. "God so loved that He gave." He gave for all. Every life is worth redeeming. "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us." Persecution, distress, peril, famine, death, things present or things to come cannot harm us, for God is for us. Such is the faith that makes Christmas possible.

And a second detail of our preparation is to add to our faith great expectations. Here we share both with God and with Jesus Christ. God believed that the world was ready. Jesus believed that persons would respond to a demonstration of the depth of God's love. But now, in the twentieth century, we seem to have lost sight of the measure of love and power of goodness. We are so concerned about the fact that we miss the glory. We pull the shutters upon the windows of wonder and get lost amid the dark and dismal facts. To look at history is to praise God for the men who have been unwilling to amid the dark and dismal facts. To the facts. Some have discovered that the so-called facts are too small for the promises of God. The shepherds returned glorifying and praising God for what they had heard and seen. Now there were new facts! There were new dimensions. God had spoken. Now it was glory to God in the highest, for on earth there would be peace among men. They returned by another way expecting great things of God. Our preparation includes great expectations.

And a third detail of our preparation is the careful checking of our desires. What do we want? To break even on the Christmas list is not enough. If Christ becomes personal as God intended, then a genuine house cleaning is in order. It will mean not only sweeping out the dust and picking up wrappings, but also sweeping out last year's habits, deeply-lodged prejudices, and premature opinions. And, let's face it, unless we are willing to replace inadequate timber in our own lives with that which is cut to God's new pattern, we too are saying, "There is no room." Our newly-ordered rooms must have high ceilings where we can grow tall as we embrace the moral quality of Jesus Christ. If Christmas has real meaning, it is in its ability to lead us to become new persons filled with the spirit of Christ.

And as the first Christmas brought God's gift it reminds us still that life's purpose is to give. But is this our desire? Is this what we really want to know? Jesus Christ who gave his all is the way. In him is the meaning of life. And his birth says, "Make level in the desert a highway for our king." But the right-of-way for the King's highway sometimes cuts across one's personal property. Is that what we want? Are we as ready to give

rs as God was willing to give His? nat if God were given the right- way in human lives, including our rn? Much of our Christmas celebra- n is shallow unless we are willing face up to our honest desires.

All is now ready. The world was dy, but what of details: faith, ex- tancy, desire? Christmas is per- sonal. It is still easier to get the house ready than to get one's self ready. News-casters sometimes say on their roundups, "Come in Mr. Brown in Berlin" or "Mr. Smith in Tokyo." That is what Christmas says. All is now ready. Come in Tom, Joe or Mary. God is at home. It is we who are abroad.

## OKS FOR PULPIT PREACHING from page 2

rmons based on the questions peo- ask. Typical questions are: Is it ht for me to love myself? How n I learn to take it? What about th and health? and What does it an to imitate Christ? The sermons imaginative, pertinent, and bring resources of the Bible and the ristian faith into the focus of daily ing. (Abingdon Press, 128 pp., $2)

Pastors and church people who ve not already discovered the ative and inspirational books by rold E. Kohn, Charlevoix (Michi- n) pastor, have a rich treat await- them. As in his three previous oks, Mr. Kohn in **Thoughts Afield** erweaves his talents as artist and thor to produce a book that stimu- es interest in the worlds of nature l of the spirit. The forty devotions ter in the appeals and interpreta- ns of the four seasons. Each chap- is illustrated by two or more pressively-conceived pen and ink awings. (Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub- lishing Co., 171 pp., $3.75)

The fourth volume in Harper's New Testament Commentaries is **The Epistle to the Philippians** by F. W. Beare. This latest addition to a series which promises to be unqualifiedly superior includes chapters on the integrity, destination, character, and theology of the epistle and a vigorous translation and verse-by-verse commentary. No other book offers a bet- ter source for the student's under- standing of this epistle. (Harper & Brothers, 182 pp., $3.50)

Violet Alleyn Storey's poems have been widely quoted for many years. Some of them are standard anthology pieces, but many are not readily available. It is good to have sixty- nine of her prayer-poems brought to- gether in a slim and handsome volume, **A Poet Prays.** Miss Storey expresses her profoundly-moving re- ligious faith in a manner which will help and thrill all readers of this book. (Abingdon Press, 80 pp., $2)

## ORTH QUOTING from page 2

, isn't there some way that I could one good thing before I die, just good thing?"

That's the amazing other side of man nature, the eternal longing in darkest heart to do "one good ng before I die." The Christian be- ves in the goodness of man but y because he's been willing to derstand his sinfulness. So, the first igious question you must ask is: ow real do I want to be, how honest?" If you'll never face the scandal of your life, you'll never see its glory. Christianity promises no half-way. It offers you no tran- quilizer."

—Harry H. Kreuner, **Specifically to Youth** (Harpers)

* * *

I am sure that many of us tend to think of the church as one of the many good voluntary societies that compete for our time, attention, and

support. Isn't it true that you have to choose whether you will teach a Sunday school class or be active in the PTA? And sometimes the PTA wins out. We Americans tend to think of our church as one of the many voluntary organizations which make up so valuable a part of our free society. The Community Chest, the women's club, the League of Women Voters, the civic music association, the professional and service clubs are thought of by most of us as important opportunities for community service, and among them, and competing with them, is the church and its organizations. Let me be very clear that I am not critical of these other competing voluntary organizations. In fact, these that I have mentioned are, I believe, important parts of the full life of the American man and woman.

But I do suggest that the church does not belong in such a list at all. The church is not simply one among many good causes. The church ought to be classed in an entirely different category.

—Eugene Carson Blake, **"He Is Lord of All** (Westminster)

* * *

Man is an inveterate idolater; he places himself and his work rather than God at the center of creation—this is the essence of sin.

—Harry H. Kreuner, **Specifically to Youth**

* * *

It is in the home that a child really learns to know God, and it is more important for him to hear his father and mother pray than it is to hear the minister.

—W. Taliaferro Thompson

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Becoming a Christian is not an invitation to patient reliance on God, but a summons to ceaseless participation in His creative and redemptive purpose. — Donald S. Lamka

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The mark of true Christian freedom is flexibility, whereby a church, holding fast to Christ, becomes all things to all men in the service of the Gospel. — H. F. Lovell Cocks

* * *

The great sweep of a suspension bridge across a bay is a majestic sight. To most people it appears as almost a symbol of effortless grace and character. But it seems fair to suppose that a bridge engineer sees far more than the beauty which meets the eyes of the layman, and additional beauty not on its apparent strength but on its nonapparent resiliencies, its flexibilities, and its expansions, without which its arches would crash. Built rigidly for either the summer's heat or the winter's cold, and without regard to the wind, its great towers would topple.

So it seems to me is a nation, any nation, a suspension bridge, whose rigidity and flexibilities must be and are in a constant state of balance and rebalance, though not readily apparent to the naked eye.

Now, to carry the bridge analogy further, what makes the American republic the most beautiful political structure in the history of man is not only the lofty intellectual towers erected by the founding fathers but the magnificently ingenious built-in devices of flexibility by which each succeeding generation could bring its own faculties to bear on its own problems. The beauty of the American republic is that the past provided for the future by permitting the present to take care of itself. It is argued that it is not businesslike. It wasn't intended to be. Constitutional friction was designed to provide the continuing sparks of liberty.

—James A. Farley in **Atlantic Monthly**

* * *

Sometimes we hear people talk about the six million Jews who died in Nazi gas ovens and perhaps because he knows we cannot respond properly the speaker is indignant and rhetorical. And the man who talks about the half-million starving Hindus does so with incredulity.

But the man whose little girl has
en hit by a car is the least indignant
d rhetorical of all men, and when
sees the crumpled body he is too
-believing.

The great sadness of our history is
at the mortal imagination cannot
mmon the same grief for the casual-
s of an earthquake that it can for
e little girl.

Because it is only to individuals
at compassion and sympathy be-
ng. The death of a loved one over-
elms compassion with its brutal
ality, but a whole city does not.
e desperate fact is that we cannot
ll our sympathy to the group. If
e could, a half-million Hindus
uld be alive next year . . .

Perhaps the day will come when
r imagination will not be surprised
vast numbers and we will be able
see every individual as integral in
mself. If that day comes it will be
cause we placed such high value
the single individual.

— Harry L. Golden

* * *

The poet of that Psalm drew no
stinction between "beholding the
ir beauty of the Lord" and the
ts of worship themselves.

When the mind becomes more
pable of abstraction and analysis
is old unity breaks up. And no
oner is it possible to distinguish the
e from the vision of God than
ere is a danger of the rite becom-
g a substitute for, and a rival to,
od Himself. Once it can be thought
separately, it will; and it may
en take on a rebellious, cancerous
e of its own. There is a stage in
child's life at which it cannot
parate the religious from the mere-
festal character of Christmas and
aster. I have been told of a very
nall and very devout boy who was
ard murmuring to himself on
aster morning a poem of his own
mposition which began "Chocolate
gs and Jesus risen". This seems to
e, for his age, both admirable
etry and admirable piety. But of course the time will soon come when such a child can no longer effortlessly and spontaneously enjoy that unity. He will become able to distinguish the spiritual from the ritual and festal aspect of Easter; chocolate eggs will no longer be sacramental. And once he has distinguished he must put one or the other first. If he puts the spiritual first he can still taste something of Easter in the chocolate eggs; if he puts the eggs first they will soon be no more than any other sweetmeat. They have taken on an independent, and therefore a soon withering, life . . . The unity falls apart; the sacrificial rites become distinguishable from the meeting with God.

— C. S. Lewis, **Reflections on the Psalms** (Harcourt, Brace)

* * *

Work, and thou wilt bless the day
Ere the toil be done;
They that work not, can not pray,
Can not feel the sun.
God is living, working still,
All things work and move,
Work, or lose the power to will,
Lose the power to love.

— John Sullivan Dwight

* * *

They who have steeped their souls in prayer can every anguish calmly bear. — Lord Houghton

* * *

Forget yourself for others, and others will never forget you.

* * *

The fellow who worries about what people will think of him wouldn't worry so much if he only know how seldom they do.

* * *

To achieve success, not by heritage but by individual effort, is the greatest joy of life. — J. P. Morgan

* * *

Gossip is the tool of the coward. Christian courage never resorts to the baseness of gossip to achieve its end. Gossip is the product of shallow minds. They try to impress others with what they pretend to know. Gos-

sip is the diversion of the fool. Wisdom is gainfully employed in the application of knowledge. Gossip is like a muddy stream that seeks to find its own level. Sincerity and love will have no part in it. Gossip is really lower than a viper; only it strikes without warning. Gossip associates itself with lying: and thrives on half truths.

* * *

Freedom to drink cannot exist with the freedom from drink. Alcohol, by its very nature, is powerless to dispense equal rights. Consciously or unconsciously, it is a merciless dictator, seeing, hearing, feeling no rights except its own desire.—J. Allen Blair

* * *

People are often happy in their religion because they are happy in their circumstances. They do well because they are well to do. The rich young ruler hardly knew how much of his happiness as a virtuous person depended upon his being a rich one.

* * *

To avoid old age keep taking on new thoughts and throwing off old habits.

* * *

Early in Jean Giraudoux's "The Madwoman of Chaillot," the philosophical rag-picker informs the Countess, or Madwoman, that the world has changed. ". . . . Why didn't you tell me this before?" asks the Countess. "Because," the ragpicker replies, "you live in a dream, Countess, and we don't like to disturb you."

On the surface, the ragpicker and the Madwoman may pass as two likely candidates for Bedlam. Like all true comic characters, however, they are sane and the rest of the world is mad, for great comedy not only amuses but disturbs the audience, destroying webs of illusion and toppling false gods. — Jo Coppola

* * *

When I was a boy living in a poor section, coming from hard-working people, it was unknown that the poor would not go to church . . . It was the last thing that they would neglect. Now, with social security checks and welfare checks coming in, they are not interested in the church. They go from day to day knowing that tomorrow will take care of itself. Their former dependence on God, upon the personal charity of those representing religion, has been psychologically unsettled by the welfare state.—Richard James Cushing

* * *

Big business is worried about one of its human products — executives. For years, large companies have been selecting their men on the basis of narrow technical skills, forcing them into a highly competitive environment, and thus shaping them into a progressively more rigid outlook. Now the companies find that these men lack the glamour for the top-echelon jobs. Their cultivation of aggression as a virtue shows; so does their primary devotion to money, rather than to the stated higher ideals . . . In short, after teaching them to think small, the companies suddenly want them to "think big." — David Roy

* * *

Our time is the first in which man has become thoroughly and completely problematic to himself.—Max Scheler

* * *

Some people try religion because it is cheaper than a prescription and it might work. — Truman Douglass

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A business of the Church is to interpret money, to show the meaning of money. — John Thompson Peters

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The world does not take the church seriously because the church is not serious about its work. — Paul Calvin Payne

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The world is suing the church for divorce, because of non-support.

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You can't drop a nickel in a slot, push a button, and expect a good boy to come out even if you call the

achine a Sunday school. — Paul
alvin Payne

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We need courage to do what we
not feel able to do. — Shelton

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What is the final product to be
e when the church and family work
gether? We do harm to the child
hen we do not work together, when
e church and the home do not
ree. — Hazel Lewis

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We lose the faculty of effort unless
e do something we do not want to
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We can only teach what a child
n learn. — Ethel Smither

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Do we settle the religious problem
the child or sigh with relief when
nother child asks a question and
anges the subject? — Ethel Smither

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The world is a family or a fight.
— Helen Topping

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Greatness lies not in performing
onders with good tools, but in per-
rming them in spite of poor tools.

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There will always be something
at we shall wish to have finished,
d be nevertheless, unwilling to be-
n. — Samuel Johnson

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It's just common sense that if you
n't keep on trying, you'll stop.
— Calvin Coolidge

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We must live in keeping with the
mands of our day. Those in need
ere cared for by Jesus.—Glen McRae

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The principal thing in this world
to keep one's soul aloft.

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Let's try to "better our lot" by do-
g a lot better.

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The most glorious moments in your
e are not the so-called days of suc-
ss, but rather those days when out
of dejection and despair, you feel rise in you a challenge to life, and the promise of future accomplishments.
— Gustave Flaubert

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A Church is validated as a Church of God not by its organized structure but by its missionary action. Order must always be secondary to mission.
— John A. Mackay

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If the question were looked into properly, it might be discovered that orthodox Christian doctrine offers the best rationale for democracy . . . I refer to St. Paul's text, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." **All** have sinned! It is the most democratic of propositions! — Randall Stewart

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It is the never ending duty of the church to convert people to the Christian faith and to a Christian way of looking at the world and living in it. — **The Christian Century**

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All blindness in the world is not physical. There is a sense of concern for God which lifts us beyond the triva. Richard K. Smith

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We can break through in Asia if we can breakout in America . . . Christ is Lord of this world.
Paul Newton Poling

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I am a tool in the hands of God. Because I am a tool, I am not going to work but be used.
Ebenezer Abboa-Offel of Ghana

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The single purpose of the Church is to glorify God, who, through Christ, has called it into existence . . . Every teaching of Christ in the Gospels is oriented about the doing of God's will; and it is by the doing of His will that God is glorified.
Theophilus M. Taylor

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Man does not only **think.** He loves. He dreams. He sacrifices himself. He builds. He runs risks. He worships . . .

No heavier responsibility rests upon the intellectual than that of involving himself critically but constructively in this modern search for the true and full meaning and purpose of life.
John McGill Krumm

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There ought to be some way to proclaim the offense of the Cross without being offensive.
Silas G. Kessler

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Proselyting is marked by self-righteousness and is thus very different from converting. Lincoln Anderson

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The great affliction of youth today is liberty. They may no longer disobey. Jean Cocteau

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The task is not to "give them the word," but to confront them with the Living Word, Jesus Christ, and that in language which is meaningful to them and relevant to their true situation. It is not to stand off at the side of life offering band-aids and panaceas, but to enter into the thick of it as true servants of the people the Servant Lord himself came to redeem.—Arthur R. McKay.

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It is indeed remarkable that suffering and hardship do not, as a rule, abate the love of life; they seem, on the contrary, usually to give it a keener zest. The sovereign source of melancholy is repletion. Need and struggle are what excite and inspire us; our hour of triumph is what brings the void. Not the Jews of the captivity, but those of Solomon's glory are those from whom the pessimistic utterance in the Bible come . . . The history of our own race is one long commentary on the cheerfulness that comes from fighting ills.
—William James.

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It is quite certain that Jesus never considered his life as a career of "sacrifice," but as a career of glorious privilege; and every true disciple who has caught his spirit will consider his work, whether at home or in distant lands, under favorable auspices or in the most difficult fields, as a similar privilege.—Arlo Ayres Brown in "Problems of Christian Living."

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There is nothing noble in being superior to some other man. The true nobility is in being superior to your former self.—Hindu proverb.

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With the decline of the religious life, neuroses grow more frequent.
—Jung.

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The word servant is so debased in our culture, with implications that are hateful to whole races now deliberately emerging from the servitude of colonialism. Precisely because 'servant' has been debased to mean compulsion and involuntary servitude, its full meaning must be restored, for as Dr. Tillich has written, there are certain words "which need healing before they can be used for the healing of men." It is our belief that the redemption and restoration of 'servant' and 'service' will come only as we take seriously the meaning of 'servant' as it is defined in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. — James I. McCord.

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Calvanism exhibited a keen interest in freedom, the keener the longer its history. But it was a responsible freedom. Freedom was demanded, not so much that men might enjoy freedom per se, but that they might fulfill their responsibilities to the sovereign God. This is a theologically based freedom, in distinction from the freedom ideas of secular liberals. It is a freedom that, in the long run, is less relative and less movable. This is a freedom that men can insist upon in order to get on to the most important business of life.—Graydon E. McClellan.